

## AMERICA MISSES THE POINT, AGAIN

they did this t.v. biography of jack london,  
and they were very impressed  
that he said he only wrote his stories and novels  
to buy stallions and ranches,

that, indeed, his cattle were more interesting to him  
than his literary works.

they didn't note the possibility of a connection  
between that materialism  
and the sadness of his final years.

## LITERARY CAPSULE

my daughter asks me who a certain person is,  
and i say, "she's a poet, a novelist,  
and a bit of a pain in the ass,"

and my daughter gives me a look  
that i realize means  
i could as easily be describing myself.

## FAMILY DRAMA

i rush home from the always unfinished office work  
for martha graham's clytemnestra.  
ballet on t.v. often provides me with  
the starting point for a poem.  
and even when it doesn't, it's an easy  
substitute for culture.

my wife and i, with the help of a literary encyclopedia,  
refresh our memories of the periphery  
of the oresteia.  
but twenty minutes into the telecast  
my wife is caring for the baby  
and i am cajoled (commanded) by my three-year-old  
into a trojan horseyback ride.

the ballet is an approximation  
of the dissonances and a-rhythms  
of a royal stable.  
i can tell my little girl,  
a lover of song music dance,



is troubled by this cl Clytemnestra.  
"i don't like it," she finally says,  
and i waste no time in turning it off,  
because a part of me,  
although my art world has always been that  
of the modern experimental forms,  
does not care for this cl Clytemnestra either,  
at least not in my family's abode.

in a rare interlude of electronic silence,  
my daughter and i build towers and amphitheatres  
of sempiternal blocks  
until bedtime.

PASS THE HEMLOCK, PLEASE

i run into a girl who took  
appreciation of literature from me  
three years ago, and i ask kiddingly  
if the course made her  
a better, wiser, happier, or richer person.

"i'll say this for it," she says;  
"i'm now able to explain why  
i can't stand ernest hemingway."

DON'T DO ME ANY FAVORS

on friday i clean out my pockets  
of quarters and dimes  
because i know she always needs  
extra coins for the laundromat.  
i go get some pizza,  
and the next night some chinese food.

on sunday night when i say,  
"i'm a buck short for the movie  
and don't have time to cash a check,  
she says, "don't talk to me -- i'm broke."

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA